



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release March 17, 1988

Megan Durham 202/343-5634

PRELIMINARY REGULATIONS PROPOSED FOR 1988-89 MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING SEASONS

It's almost spring and most people's thoughts are turning to baseball, fishing, and other warm-weather pursuits, but the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is already looking ahead to fall hunting seasons. The Service has begun the process of setting regulations for migratory bird hunting with preliminary proposals published in the March 9, 1988 Federal Register. There will be two public hearings and ample time for public comment before final hunting regulations are set.

The Service has made no decisions about duck and goose hunting seasons because 1987 harvest data and 1988 spring breeding population counts are not yet available. The Service has announced, however, that it will be taking a close look at the possibility that hunting regulations for black ducks may need to be changed. An environmental assessment to evaluate alternatives for black duck hunting regulations is being prepared and will be made available for public comment before hunting regulations are established.

At this time, the Service is proposing to continue early teal seasons and extra teal options this year. However, because the breeding population of blue-winged teal has been generally depressed in recent years, the Service believes that September teal seasons and extra teal options should be re-examined for blue-winged teal and, if populations decline further, such special seasons may not be advisable.

The Service also is proposing to continue restrictive regulations for eastern woodcock and the 3-year harvest reduction program begun in 1987 for

(over)

mourning doves in western states (Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington).

Proposed hunting regulations for most other migratory bird species are similar to last year's. Details of the proposed regulations can be found in the March 9, 1988 Federal Register. Public comments are invited and should be received by June 22 for regulations affecting Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands; by July 18 for other early season proposals (seasons opening before October 1); and by August 29 for late season proposals (seasons opening on or after October 1). A public hearing on early season regulations, including those for Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, will be held June 22 at 9 a.m. at the Auditorium, Interior Department Building, 18th and C Streets NW, Washington, DC. A public hearing on late season regulations will be held August 3 at 9 a.m. at the same location. Written public comments should be addressed to Director (FWS/MBM0), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Matomic Building, Room 536, Washington, DC, 20240.

-DOI-